DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 677 HE 013 455

AUTHOR Nelson, Robert B.: Poremba, Gregory A.
TITLE Preliminary Results of the Division of Student Affairs Student Retention Study at the University of North Dakota.
INSTITUTION North Dakota Univ., Grand Forks.
REPORT NO RB-SA-110180
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 9p.
AVAILABLE FROM University of North Dakota, Division of Student Affairs, Grand Forks, ND 58202.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement: Academic Aptitude: Academic Persistence: *College Freshmen: Comparative Analysis: Dropouts: Females: Grade Point Average: Higher Education: Institutional Research: Males: Predictor Variables: *School Holding Power: State Universities: Statistical Data: *Student Attrition: *Withdrawal (Education)
IDENTIFIERS *University of North Dakota

ABSTRACT

Preliminary retention data on regular freshmen at the University of North Dakota (UND) are analyzed for 1976-80. It is shown that at the end of the freshmen year, approximately 25 percent of an entering class has left the university, with an additional 13 percent leaving by the end of their sophomore year. Data on freshmen attrition is provided by number of semesters attended and the year for UND and also for 28 institutions (averaged). Data on the mean cumulative grade point average (GPA) of students at the time they exit the university indicate that only those students leaving after one semester appear to be academically deficient. Typically, students leaving after the second semester are performing adequately academically and, after three semesters, generally seem to be doing quite well. Average American College Testing (ACT) program composite standard scores of students who leave the university are presented by their last semester of attendance. Males scored higher on ACT scores, while females had higher GPAs across all levels. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

HE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

William B Bryson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED197677

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS STUDENT RETENTION STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

REPORT #1

Robert B. Nelson
Gregory A. Poremba

RB-SA-110180

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS STUDENT RETENTION STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

REPORT #1

Robert B. Nelson
Gregory A. Poremba

RB-SA-110180

The attached three tables summarize the first results obtained from the Division of Student Affairs study of student retention at the University of North Dakota. We emphasize these results are preliminary and subject to further revision, though they do appear to possess considerable "face" validity.

The data reflect students who, during their first term of attendance, were classified as "undergraduate regular" -- "new freshman" by the University's computerized student record system. Thus, the total N reported for each year's entering class is somewhat lower than the enrollment figures used by the Office of Admissions and Records for new student enrollment since their figures also include students classified as "special."

In addition, much of the data base had to be reconstructed through the visual inspection of individual student records, due to the inability of the student record system to identify accurately all members of an entering class. This process could well have led to human error resulting in the exclusion of students who should have been included. It is believed, however, that this represents an insignificant source of error.

Student Attrition

Table 1 represents the number of students exiting the University from each year's entering class by their semester of last attendance. The figure in parentheses represents what percentage that number is of the total entering class. For example, during or at the end of their third semester in college, 79 students from the 1978-79 entering class

terminated their college studies at UND. This number was 5% of the total number (1582) "undergraduate regular" -- "new freshman" students who started college in 1978-79.

TABLE 1

University of North Dakota

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ATTRITION

BY

SEMESTER AND YEAR

Number of Semesters Attended	Average Attrition[a] Rate at 28 Institutions	Undergraduate-Regular New Freshman 1976-77 N=1419	1977-78 N=1465	1978-79 N=1582	1979-80 N=1558
1	8.6%	107(7.5%)	146(10.0%)	143(9.0%)	134(8.6%)
2	13.4	214(15.1)	221(15.5)	247(15.6)	---
3	6.5	47(3.3)	50(3.4)	79(5.0)	---
4	4.7	131(9.2)	154(10.5)	---	---
5	9.9	38(2.7)	43(2.9)	---	---
6	1.4	70(4.9)	---	---	---
7	3.5	60(4.2)	---	---	---
8	2.0	---	---	---	---
TOTAL	50.0%				

[a]Taken from Cope & Hannah's (1975) study of midwestern public colleges and universities.

Though information is only available from 1976 to the present, some general trends seem evident. By the end of the freshman year, approximately 25% of an entering class has left UND, with an additional 13% leaving by

the end of their sophomore year. These percentages are consistent with those reported by Cope & Hannah (1975) in their study of student attrition at 28 midwestern public colleges and universities. Although our data are incomplete, it also appears that total attrition over eight semesters will approach the 50% level.

Student Grade Point Averages

Table 2 represents the mean cumulative grade point average of students at the time they exit the University. Some general trends are

TABLE 2

University of North Dakota

MEAN CUMULATIVE GPA

BY LAST SEMESTER ATTENDED

AND BY SEX

Number of Semesters Attended	Undergraduate-Regular New Freshman							
	1976-77		1977-78		1978-79		1979-80	
	M[a]	F[b]	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	1.10	1.22	1.06	1.11	1.11	1.57	1.00	1.31
2	2.02	2.22	1.81	2.16	2.00	2.13	--	
3	1.77	2.21	2.03	2.58	2.19	2.39	--	
4	2.38	2.48	2.32	2.51	--		--	
5	2.16	2.76	2.18	2.69	--		--	
6	2.34	2.70	--		--		--	
7	2.60	2.68	--		--		--	
8	--		--		--		--	

[a] Male

[b] Female

evident here also. Only those students leaving after one semester appear to be academically deficient. Typically students leaving after the second semester are performing adequately academically and, after three semesters, generally seem to be doing quite well. Females consistently earn higher GPA's than their male counterparts across all levels. The common assumption that students who "drop out" are those that can't "cut the mustard" appears to be erroneous. Non-academic reasons may well account for the majority of decisions for leaving UND.

ACT - Composite Scores

Table 3 represents the average ACT composite standard score of students who leave the University by their last semester of attendance. The composite is the numerical average of the four sub-tests (English, Math, Social Science, and Natural Science) and thus gives a more global measure of a student's academic ability. The results here do not appear to be as clear cut. Although the scores of students leaving later in their college careers tend to be higher than early leavers, there appears to be little difference between those exiting between their second and fifth semesters. In almost all cases, however, these scores fall below the average composite score for the class. An interesting finding is that although male ACT scores are consistently higher than female ACT scores (with three exceptions), the females attain higher GPA's.

Conclusion

Again, it must be emphasized that these are preliminary results and should be interpreted as such. No statistical tests of significance have been conducted and the results reported are based strictly on a visual inspection of the data. As the retention study progresses, additional reports will be prepared with greater statistical rigor

TABLE 3

University of North Dakota

MEAN ACT-COMPOSITE STANDARD SCORES

BY

SEX AND LAST SEMESTER ATTENDED

Number of Semesters Attended	Undergraduate-Regular New Freshman							
	1976-77		1977-78		1978-79		1979-80	
	M[a] (22.5)	F[b] (20.1)[c]	M (22.1)	F (20.6)	M (22.1)	F (22.4)	M (21.7)	F (20.3)
1	18.4	17.1	18.8	17.5	19.0	17.6	18.4	17.8
2	20.2	18.5	18.7	18.2	19.2	18.1	--	
3	21.0	19.3	20.3	21.8	18.3	17.3	--	
4	22.4	17.7	20.4	18.4	--		--	
5	20.7	21.0	20.4	21.1	--		--	
6	23.3	22.5	--		--		--	
7	22.4	21.7	--		--		--	
8	--		--		--		--	

[a] Male

[b] Female

[c] Numbers in parentheses indicate the mean ACT-Composite standard score for all UND students completing the ACT-Assessment for a given year from the state of North Dakota. Scores for students from other states were not available by sex.

analyzing the data in a variety of ways. Therefore, conclusions regarding the nature and extent of student attrition and retention at the University of North Dakota should not be made prematurely.

REFERENCES

ACT Standard Research Service Report. The University of North Dakota, 1976-77 Freshmen. Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program.

ACT Standard Research Service Report. The University of North Dakota, 1977-78 Freshmen. Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program.

ACT Standard Research Service Report. The University of North Dakota, 1978-79 Freshmen. Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program.

ACT Standard Research Service Report. The University of North Dakota, 1979-80 Freshmen. Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program.

Cope, R. G. & Hannah, W. Revolving College Doors: The causes and consequences of dropping out, stopping out, and transferring. New York: Wiley, 1975.